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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS



IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

ORAL HYGIENE.—*The Journal of the American Medical Association* agrees in the opinion that diseased teeth and gums are a constant menace to health. If the mucous membrane of the mouth and gums is in a healthy condition it is almost impervious to infection, otherwise it becomes an avenue of infection. The germ of tuberculosis may enter through decayed teeth or infected pulp-canals. Primary tuberculosis of the mouth is not a rare disease. The septic mouth is a centre for the spread of the disease to others.

ALCOHOL IN PATENT MEDICINES.—*The Medical Record* says that over three hundred patent medicines in the shape of tonics, nervines, stomach bitters, etc., are now classed as alcoholic beverages by the Internal Revenue Department and taxed accordingly. The commissioner has recently added sixty to the list of so-called remedies which are not sufficiently medicated to render them disagreeable as beverages.

ANTISEPTIC POWER OF SOAP.—M. Pilod states in *La Presse Médicale* that it is unnecessary to sterilize soap by means of heat before use. It is sufficient to wash off the surface of the cake in order to dislodge mechanically the spores that may have accumulated there. For surgical antisepsis the bactericidal powers of soap cannot be relied upon.

TREATING TETANUS WITH CARBOLIC ACID.—*The Medical Record* advocates the treatment of tetanus after the Italian method by means of injections of carbolic acid. Baccelli gave subcutaneously injections of carbolic acid in 3 per cent. dilution frequently enough to make the quantity of pure phenol injected daily from 5 to 7.5 grains. Not the least thing in the favor of this treatment is its utter simplicity, permitting its use amid the most inadequate surroundings.

TREATMENT OF DOG BITES.—*The Journal of the Medical Society of New Jersey* says the dog should not be killed, but chained and kept under close observation for sixteen days at least. If he is infected with

rabies he will show symptoms in that time, and probably will be dead in ten days, as it is a fatal disease in animals. Pasteur treatment, to be effective, must be instituted in five days. The virus is harmless if given under antiseptic precautions, so it is better to run no risk, but give it even in doubtful cases.

THE SCIENTIFIC EMPLOYMENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPEUTICS.—Dr. Philip Marvel, in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, urges the more frequent employment of massage, electricity, calisthenics, and hydrotherapy. He condemns the medical schools for not giving more efficient instruction in these lines. The hot drip blanket pack and the hot sea-water tub, covered, he considers valuable in cardiovascular diseases, and electricity as an aid for disturbances incidental to both functional and organic cases.

RELIEF IN TONSILLITIS.—*The American Journal of Surgery* says that irrigation of the throat with ice-water from a fountain syringe will relieve the congestion and pain in acute follicular tonsillitis.

PREVENTION OF OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.—A German medical journal recommends the use of argentum aceticum for the eyes of infants instead of the 2 per cent. solution of nitrate of silver commonly employed. The acetic silver solution 1-100, or 1 per cent., remains unchanged for a very long time, is much safer than the nitrate of silver, and the reaction following its use is much less.

LIGATURE OF THE UMBILICAL CORD.—*The American Journal of Surgery*, quoting the experience of a German obstetrician, says on the basis of 654 cases Möller concludes that one ligature to secure the umbilicus of the child, leaving the maternal side free, hastens the expulsion of the placenta. The great majority were delivered within fifteen minutes. The small size of the placenta permits the uterus to expel it more easily.

CANDY MEDICATION.—Dr. Bernard Fantus, in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, describes his efforts to prepare medicine in the form of a palatable candy that will be taken by children without the struggling and resistance that do as much harm as the medicine can do good. He finds a practical form to be a rather lightly compressed tablet made of firmly powdered cane-sugar; to this is added a small quantity of cacao butter to bind the ingredients. The flavoring is

sprayed upon the finished tablet by means of an atomizer. The tablets can be colored with carmine, malachite green, etc. Bismuth subnitrate, chalk, magnesia, reduced iron, aristochin, a comparatively tasteless form of quinine, sulphur and many other drugs have been thus disguised. To prevent the danger of children eating the candy indiscriminately, not more tablets should be prescribed than can be taken at one time without doing harm.

DIPHTHERIA BACILLI IN THE URINE.—*The Medical Record* states, as the result of the investigations of German physicians, that in about one-third of all cases of diphtheria virulent bacilli reach the urine and are often in position to propagate the infection. It should be carefully disinfected so long as the disease lasts.

POSTOPERATIVE HICCUP.—In the *Journal of the American Medical Association* Dr. William F. Doolittle reports a case of hiccup, following an operation for appendicitis, which was relieved, and after four applications overcome, by the passage of the stomach-tube. Various remedial agents had been tried first—oil of amber, Hoffman's anodyne, ether sprayed on the epigastrium, inhalation of nitrate of amyl, counter-irritation over the diaphragm, holding the breath, psychic effect of fright, etc.—without apparent result.

VOMITING IN INFANCY.—*The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* says that vomiting in breast-fed infants is probably due almost always to a too high percentage of fat, caused by overfeeding and lack of exercise on the part of the mother. Her daily life should be regulated and the milk diluted if necessary. In bottle-fed babies some cases result from giving too strong a formula at the time of weaning. Too frequent feedings and too high fat percentage may also be the cause.

DECLINE IN THE BIRTH-RATE.—Sir Shirley P. Murphy, writing in the *Lancet*, expresses an opinion on this subject contrary to the one usually held. He says the evidence apparently indicates that the decline in the birth-rate has not been brought about voluntarily, but is due to natural causes. He questions whether any artificial measures could possibly have such wide-spread synchronous results as the decline in the birth- and death-rates. Another author, H. R. Jones, says that a low birth-rate tends to the birth of a larger proportion of girl babies.